Tutor/Mentors
are

Parents   *Teachers*

Community Members

Extended Family

Peer Students

Establishing

THE PLAN

Tutor – Mentoring
Program

(Name of School)

Why?

- Student learning requires support
- Tutor-mentored students show increased academic achievement
- Young people need positive, successful adult role models
- The relationship works two ways
- Tutor-mentored students show positive changes in their knowledge, attitude and behavior

What is a tutor – mentor?

A person who will encourage the total growth of a student whose needs and interests are the primary consideration.

What will a tutor – mentor do?

- Review concepts
- Reinforce information
- Encourage further learning
- Bring outside experiences to the lesson
- Promote goal setting and help student achieve his/her goal(s)
- Encourage joint decision making
- Introduce student to the use of information services
- Provide opportunities for the student to try new things

Who will the tutor – mentors be?

- Honor Society students
- Soldier volunteers
- Community members
- Extended family members
- Parents
- Teachers
- Retired military
- Peer students

First Steps

Awareness – buy in of stakeholders:

Adopt a school program

How do you do it?

- Church groups
- Unit Commanders
- Public Affairs Office
- Community newspapers
- Wives club
- Sororities & Fraternities
- Youth Services
- Education Centers
- Schools' Officer
- AFN
- Veterans' of Foreign Wars
- National Honor Society
- Welcome packets/ACS

Potential Members of Planning Team:

- School Home Partnership School Site Liaison

Team will:

- Define type of tutor-mentoring for your school

Become aware of efforts and resources in community.

Access needs and resources :

- Why Tutor Mentors?

  A powerful initiative to assist students to maximize academic success and improve self-esteem.

- What needs will be addressed?

  Social and emotional needs, as well as math, vocabulary, reading and college preparation.

- Do teachers and parents have concerns?

  Parents and teachers must be an integral part of the program.

- What would a profile of a mentor look like?

  Any qualified volunteer.

- How many would we need?

  As much as 10-20% of the school population.

- How will we involve teachers?

  Referral of students to the program which would not affect the workload.

- What training will be required?

  Information packets and, training videos.

- When will Tutor Mentoring take place? How often?

  Two times a week, ideally.

- Will support staff be needed?

  Some staff could be useful to the program such as, counselors, administration, and nurse.

Goals and Objectives

Goal:

For students to be more successful in school, to have a more positive attitude about school and establish positive relationships with adults.

Examples

- Improve academic scores
- Improve self concepts
- Improve social skills and behaviors

Objectives: Measurable

Ask parents and teachers if the program has had an impact on the student.

Examples

- Behavior tracking
- Sustaining tutor groups
- Attendance
- Joint journal
- Comparing of grades over time

Role description of tutor – mentor:

1. May impart information, knowledge and skills.
2. May promote goal setting and help the student achieve his/her goals.
3. May encourage joint decision-making.
4. May encourage further learning.
5. May introduce the student to the use of information sources.
6. May provide opportunities for the student to try new things.
7. May share unique interests and experiences that connect to learning.

Ways to recruit tutor-mentors:
Recruitment Strategies

- Word of mouth
- Open house
- Posters, flyers, email
- Command briefings
- Presentations to local clubs
- Letter to parents
- Principal contacts (administrative support)
- School's office
- Advertisements

Questions to ask tutor – mentors:

- How much time do you have to give?
- What activities/interests do you have?
- Will you be able to volunteer in a consistent manner (2 times a week reliably)?
- How many students would you be able to work with?

Orientation of Tutor-Mentor:

- Interview
- Training video/orientation film
- Information packet
- Introduction to parent and student
- Confidentiality issues
- Tutor-Mentoring Reference Guide

Miscellaneous Information
For
Planning

Critical Components:
The National Mentoring Partnership's
Elements of a Responsible Mentoring Program

The national Mentoring Partnership serves as an advocate for the expansion of mentoring and a clearinghouse for information for mentors nationwide. As part of its mission to increase the availability of responsible mentoring for youth, the Partnership has compiled information on effective practices in mentoring programs, including the "nuts and bolts" checklist which appears in the Resources section of this book, and the components of a responsible mentoring program below. More information is available by contacting the Partnership or by visiting their web-site a http://www.mentoring.org.

According to the national Mentoring Partnership, a responsible mentoring program requires:

- A well-defined mission and established operating principles.
- Regular, consistent contact between the mentor and the participant.
- Support by the family or guardian of the participant.
- Additional community support services.
- An established organization of oversight.
- Adherence to general principles of volunteerism.
- Paid or volunteer staff with appropriate skills.
- Written job descriptions for all staff and volunteer positions.
- Adherence to Equal Employment Opportunities requirements.
- Inclusiveness of racial, economic and gender representation as appropriate to the program.
- Adequate financial and in-kind resources.
- Written administrative and program procedures.
- Written eligibility requirements for program participants.
- Program evaluation and ongoing assessment.
- A long-range plan that has community input.
- Risk management and confidentiality policies.
- Use of generally accepted accounting practices.
- A prudent and reasonable rationale for staffing requirements that are based on:
  - organization's statement of purpose and goals,
  - needs of mentors and participants,
  - community resources, and
  - staff and other volunteers' skill level.

Working with Parents

Parental support is an important ingredient in mentoring programs, and successful programs make an effort to get parents involved early on. Parents of minors should be required to sign a consent form in order for their children to participate. In addition, parents of minors must have the opportunity to disapprove any mentor they believe would not be good for their children.

Some parents do not want their children involved in an exclusive relationship with an adult other than themselves, and some parents are afraid that the mentors will try to take the parents' place or usurp their authority. It is important that parents understand the limitations of the mentor's role. Good programs are aware of the concerns that parents may have and try to allay those fears by explaining the program to them in training or orientation sessions. At the sessions:

- Program staff should discuss the nature of the program and review the major goals. Short- and long-term objectives should be discussed, so that parents may see how the program will benefit their children.

- Parents should receive materials and handouts similar to those the mentors receive at their training sessions.

- Program staff should tell the parents how important their participation is to the success of the program. Parents should be asked to make sure that their children keep their appointments with the mentors, review projects that have been done, and generally encourage their children to stay in the program.

- Parents should be informed of things they could do to help achieve the program's goals, such as helping their child with homework, or discussing college or future careers.

- Mentors should attend the sessions for parents so that they can meet the parents and discuss what they hope to accomplish. These sessions provide an excellent opportunity for the mentors to reassure parents that they are not trying to take the parents' place or to impose values on the children, but are providing a specific service.

- A staff person should give the parents the name and phone number of the mentor's supervisor or another contact person.

Here are some other ways to get parents involved:

- Form a parent advisory council to let parents help the program staff make decisions and establish policies affecting the program.

- Schedule activities with parents during the course of the program. These can be in the form of informal get-togethers at a local restaurant, recognition dinners for the mentors, and lunches or dinners sponsored by the program staff for the children participating in the program.

- Sponsor informal workshops on a specific problem common to young people.

- Encourage – or require – mentors to meet with parents regularly, or keep parents informed about the program by sending out newsletters or by having the mentor or a staff member call to share the child's accomplishments.

Keeping Mentors in the Program

The best programs are aware of the difficulties involved in a one-on-one mentoring relationship. For the relationship to grow, the mentor must win the trust and respect of the young person. The mentor's dedication, patience, understanding, and empathy have to be apparent to the child for a bond to form. As is true of any friendship, time is required for two persons to get to know, trust, and like each other.

However, forming these bonds is not always easy. Mentors who work with troubled children may initially encounter mistrust, or even hostility. Programs should have a well-articulated support system, including meetings with program staff and other mentors, to prevent mentors from becoming overly frustrated or discouraged.

Good programs should work hard to retain their mentors. Carefully planned, these programs are designed to give mentors the support and recognition they deserve. Here are some strategies that can be used to reward mentors and to help prevent them from dropping out:

- *Hold regular meeting between mentors and supervisors.* Mentors should discuss any problems they may encounter in dealing with their student and any misgivings about the relationship with the supervisor and other staff members. These meetings can also be especially rewarding when the supervisor can show how the mentors have helped the children - such as improvement in test scores and attendance, or if teachers have reported a noticeable change in attitude.

- *Conduct ongoing training.* As the relationship develops, there is always a need for additional training. Program staff should conduct workshops and provide books, magazine articles, and documentaries about mentor programs. Problems that have developed and possible remedies should be discussed as necessary.

- *Sponsor mentor panels.* It is important for all the mentors to meet together regularly to exchange information and discuss how they have handled problems that have come up in their relationships. Due to their shared experiences, mentors can be an especially strong source of support for one another.

- *Hold public recognition ceremonies.* Ceremonies can be in the form of testimonial dinners, to which local dignitaries are invited, along with the sponsors of the program. Local TV and radio stations can interview mentors, and schools can hold an awards assembly in their honor.

- *Publish a monthly newsletter.* Many large mentoring programs publish their own newsletters featuring program news and events, profiles of mentors and students, as well as student success stories. Documenting the students' accomplishments may serve as an inspiration to the mentors as well as the staff and sponsors of the program. Regular newsletters can also help to form a sense of community among everyone involved in the program.

- *Gain the support of parents.* When parents actively support the mentoring relationship, their children are more likely to be motivated to participate and excited about being in the program. Mentors may become discouraged if the parents are not on their side. Good programs try to get as much parental support as possible.

Dealing with Obstacles to Success

In any one-on-one personal relationship, things do not always go, as planned or expected, and mentoring relationships are no exception. Personality clashes, misunderstandings, crossed signals, and lack of direction are all factors that may make for a less-than-satisfactory relationship. Even in the most carefully planned programs, obstacles to success occur. However, many mentoring programs have found solutions through trial and error. *The main thing is for mentors and their supervisors to be aware that a problem exists so that it can be remedied quickly.* The following list of obstacles to success is based on anecdotal accounts from existing mentoring programs:

- *A "bad" match.* No matter how carefully planned and screened, mismatches do occur. Some relationships are just not meant to be. Many programs have found that if, after three to four weeks, a good relationship has not begun to form, the mentor should approach the supervisor to discuss the possible need for reassignment.

- *Communication problems.* Mentors who do not receive adequate training on effective ways to listen and communicate with young people can become confused and misinterpret signals provided by the young person. Mentors must be aware of how young people use body language, make eye contact, and provide feedback. Timing is important; mentors should know when it is their turn to listen.

- *Serious problems requiring immediate help from a supervisor.* Program planners should warn mentors about problems exhibited by the young person for whom they should seek immediate help – for example, violent behavior, drug use, extreme depression, or suicide threats.

- *Unrealistic expectations by each person.* Unrealistic expectations can be avoided if both the mentor and the student are thoroughly briefed before entering into a relationship. It is important for the young person to understand the limits of the mentor-student relationship. At the same time, the mentor must be aware that building a solid relationship takes a long time.

- *Problems in taking the initiative.* Sometimes mentors are not sure who should take the initiative in making appointments and calling on the telephone. In one mentoring program, the young people were initially expected to contact the mentors, but program planners later realized that it was too much to expect the students to take the initiative. The participants were shy and uncertain about contacting an adult, especially early in the program. In the beginning at least, it is best for the mentor to a take the initiative in setting up meetings and arranging activities.

- *Problems in selecting the right meeting place.* Some places are not conducive to meeting with children. A program that focused on career education discovered that some young participants were intimidated by meeting their mentors in their regular offices. As a result, program planners decided to set aside a special meeting room in the workplace. The "mentor center" is a comfortable, informal room with couches and chairs, which proved much more inviting to the children.